

JAMES PATTERSON

# MAX RIDE

F I R S T F L I G H T



BENNETT  
SANCHEZ  
PENNINGTON  
SANZ

**MARVEL**

003



JAMES PATTERSON

# MAX RIDE

F I R S T F L I G H T



**MAXIMUM RIDE** doesn't remember much about her past.

She remembers **THE SCHOOL**, a secret lab where **SCIENTISTS** experimented on her and her friends--Fang, Nudge, Iggy, Gasman, and Angel. She remembers the **ERASERS**, the half-human, half-wolf monsters who kept her prisoner. Most of all she remembers **JEB**, the man who gave his life to help **THE FLOCK** escape and find a life of peace...

Recently the Erasers found the Flock, destroyed their home and kidnapped Angel, so Max and the others set out to rescue her.

Not knowing the Erasers were actually tracking them, the Flock was again ambushed. Only Nudge and Fang managed to escape, while Max, Iggy, and Gazzy were captured and drugged.

Later, Max awoke in a cage only to discover that Jeb is still alive and working for The School!

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BLIND. DEAF.  
SENSELESS.

NOTHING.  
THERE'S  
NOTHING.

THERE'S  
NOTHING!

ANGEL?!  
IGGY?!  
GAZZY?!



I  
CAN'T SEE,  
I CAN'T--



GEE,  
WONDER  
WHAT **THAT'S**  
LIKE--

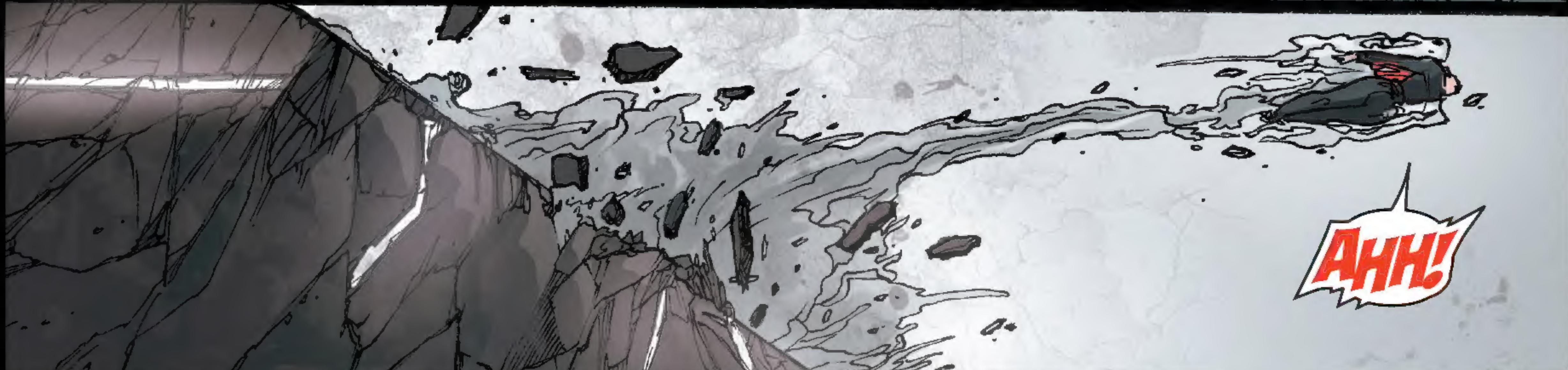


MAX?  
MAX?!

--CAN'T--I  
CAN'T BREATHE!  
DROWNING!



I'M  
COMING,  
ANGEL.



**AHH!**



DAY ONE.

AND THEN  
I KNOW--  
THIS ISN'T  
TORTURE.

THIS IS  
A TEST.

THIS IS THE  
SCHOOL.

THIS IS THE WHITE  
METAL HELL WHERE  
MY FLOCK AND FAMILY  
WERE CREATED--BY  
JEB BATCHELDER.

IGGY!  
HIT THE  
DECK!

GAZZY?

OH JEEZ.  
BE GLAD YOU  
CAN'T SEE, IGGY. I  
THINK I'M GOING  
TO BE SICK.

CRUNCH

ANGEL!

MAX!  
CAN'T  
BREATHE,  
CAN'T--

DON'T TALK,  
LITTLE MINDREADER,  
DON'T TALK--ARE  
YOU HURT?

--KROFF!  
KROFF!--

N-NO...THE  
TESTS, THEY MADE ME  
DO ALL KINDS OF--  
I'M HEALING.

IT'S OKAY, ANGEL. I'M HERE. IGGY AND  
GAZZY WERE CAUGHT TOO, BUT FANG AND  
NUDGE ARE STILL OUT THERE.

THEY'LL  
COME FOR  
US.

HEH.  
NOT QUITE.  
LET'S HOPE THEY ALL  
SCORED HIGHER IN  
"RESCUE MISSIONS"  
THAN I DID.





DAY TWO.

ANGEL,  
CAN YOU HEAR  
WHAT THE SCHOOL  
SCIENTISTS ARE  
THINKING?

THEY'RE...  
PLEASED.  
THEY THINK WE'RE  
PROGRESSING,

DAY THREE.

WHAT  
ABOUT  
JEB?

JEB IS...  
JEB IS...

SILENT.

JUST  
WHITE NOISE,  
MAXIMUM.

DAY FOUR.

HOW COULD JEB DO  
THIS TO US?! HOW IS  
HE EVEN HERE?

WE FOUND HIS BODY  
IN THE GORGE BY  
OUR HOUSE. WE BURIED  
HIM. WHO WAS THAT, IF  
NOT HIM? A CLONE?

DID HE EVER EVEN  
CARE ABOUT US, OR  
WAS HELPING US ESCAPE  
PART OF SOME ELABORATE  
PLAN? SOME TEST?

ANGEL?

YEAH?

CAN  
YOU GET  
A MESSAGE  
TO IGGY AND  
GAZZY?

DAY FIVE.

TELL  
THEM  
EVERYTHING  
WILL BE  
OK...

TELL  
THEM...I'VE  
GOT A  
PLAN.

IN TRUTH, I  
GOT NOTHING.

ANGEL, FANG, NUDGE,  
IGGY, AND GAZZY...THEY'RE  
COUNTING ON ME.

IT'S UP TO  
ME TO TAKE  
CARE OF  
THEM.

BUT I HAVE NO IDEA THE  
DEPTHS TO WHICH JEB AND THE  
SCIENTISTS MIGHT SINK TO TEST  
THE LIMITS OF OUR ABILITIES--

WAIT--  
THAT'S IT!

ANGEL? YOU  
AWAKE?

...KINDA...

SORRY TO  
WAKE YOU. CAN  
YOU TRY TO FEEL  
NUDGE AND FANG?

YOU MEAN,  
OUTSIDE THE  
SCHOOL? I'VE  
NEVER BEEN  
ABLE TO REACH  
THAT FAR.

TRY.  
THEY'VE  
GOT TO BE  
CLOSE--

MAX!  
I CAN FEEL  
THEM! THEY'RE  
IN THE DESERT,  
THEY JUST  
DON'T KNOW  
HOW TO GET  
TO US--

LISTEN  
CAREFULLY  
AND TELL THEM  
EXACTLY  
WHAT I  
SAY.

THEY TO  
NEED TO  
FOLLOW MY  
EVERY WORD...



DAY SIX.

AE-1 IS HOLDING UP BEAUTIFULLY IN COMBAT. THE TACTICAL SUIT'S KEVLAR WEAVE IS IDEAL--

THE SPECIMEN IS ABLE TO ENJOY A FULL RANGE OF MOTION WITHOUT THE FEAR OF AN ERASER PUNCTURING HER LUNGS.

AND WE NEVER LOSE OUT ON OUR INVESTMENT, YOU SEE.

INVESTMENTS, ARE WE?

WEAPONS, EXPERIMENTS, FREAKS OF NATURE--

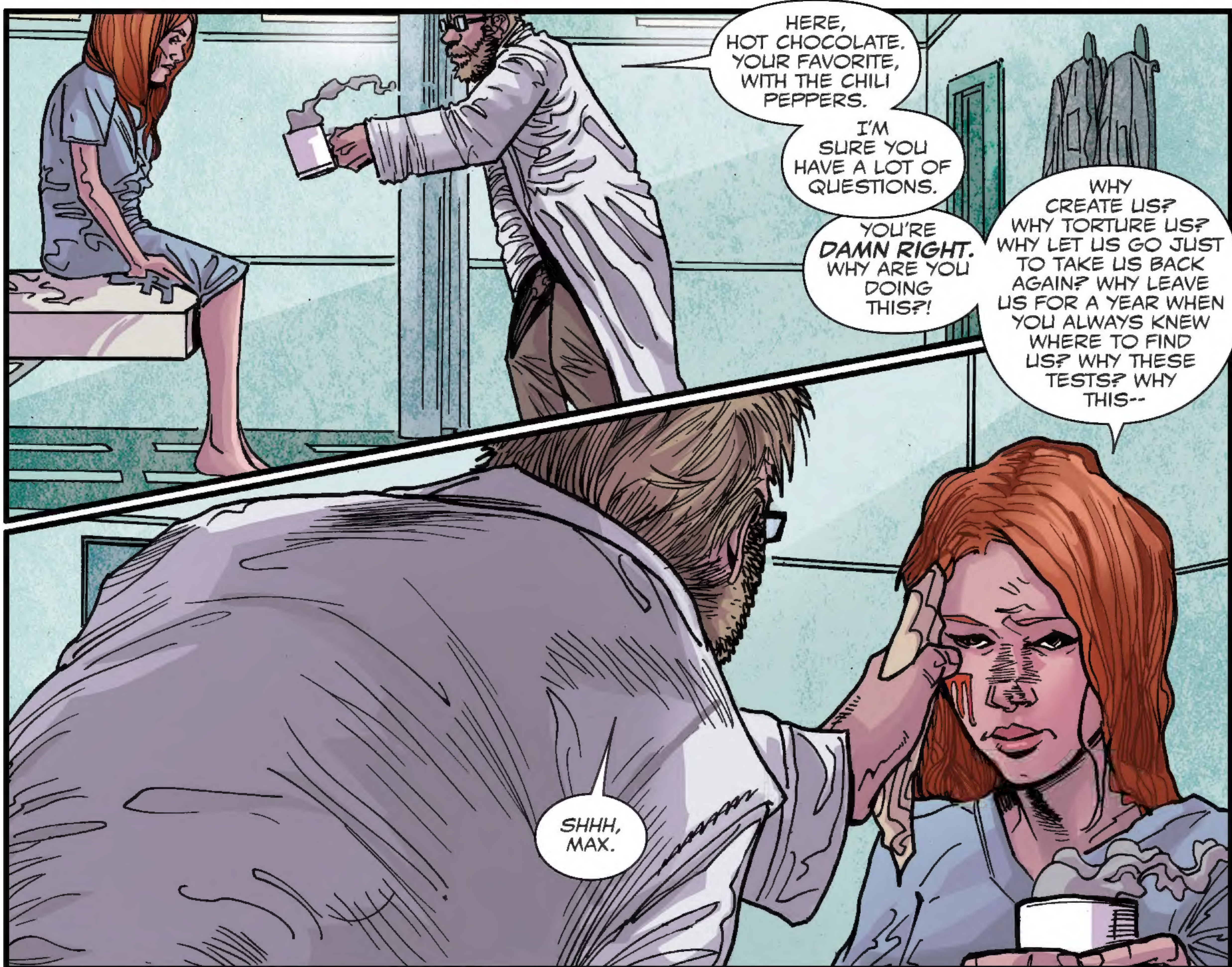
WE'LL PAY YOU BACK ON YOUR INVESTMENT.

WE'LL PAY YOU BACK IN SPADES.

FANG COULD'VE MADE A REALLY GOOD "WE'RE GONNA BURY YOU" PLIN OUT OF THAT, I BET.

MAXIMUM. A WORD?





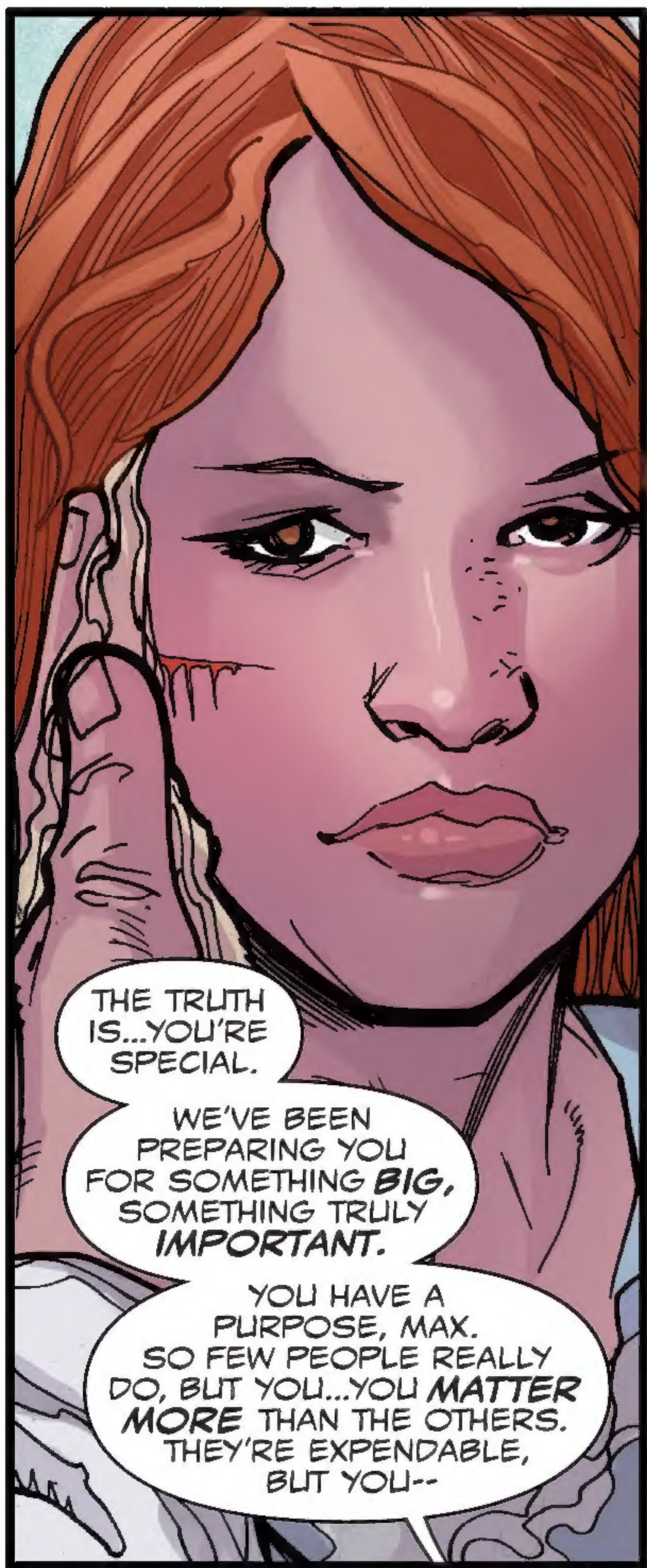
HERE, HOT CHOCOLATE. YOUR FAVORITE, WITH THE CHILI PEPPERS.

I'M SURE YOU HAVE A LOT OF QUESTIONS.

YOU'RE DAMN RIGHT. WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?!

WHY CREATE US? WHY TORTURE US? WHY LET US GO JUST TO TAKE US BACK AGAIN? WHY LEAVE US FOR A YEAR WHEN YOU ALWAYS KNEW WHERE TO FIND US? WHY THESE TESTS? WHY THIS--

SHHH, MAX.



THE TRUTH IS...YOU'RE SPECIAL.

WE'VE BEEN PREPARING YOU FOR SOMETHING **BIG**, SOMETHING TRULY IMPORTANT.

YOU HAVE A PURPOSE, MAX. SO FEW PEOPLE REALLY DO, BUT YOU...YOU **MATTER MORE** THAN THE OTHERS. THEY'RE EXPENDABLE, BUT YOU--



SSSSSS

SHUT UP!



HE DOESN'T FEEL THE PAIN...

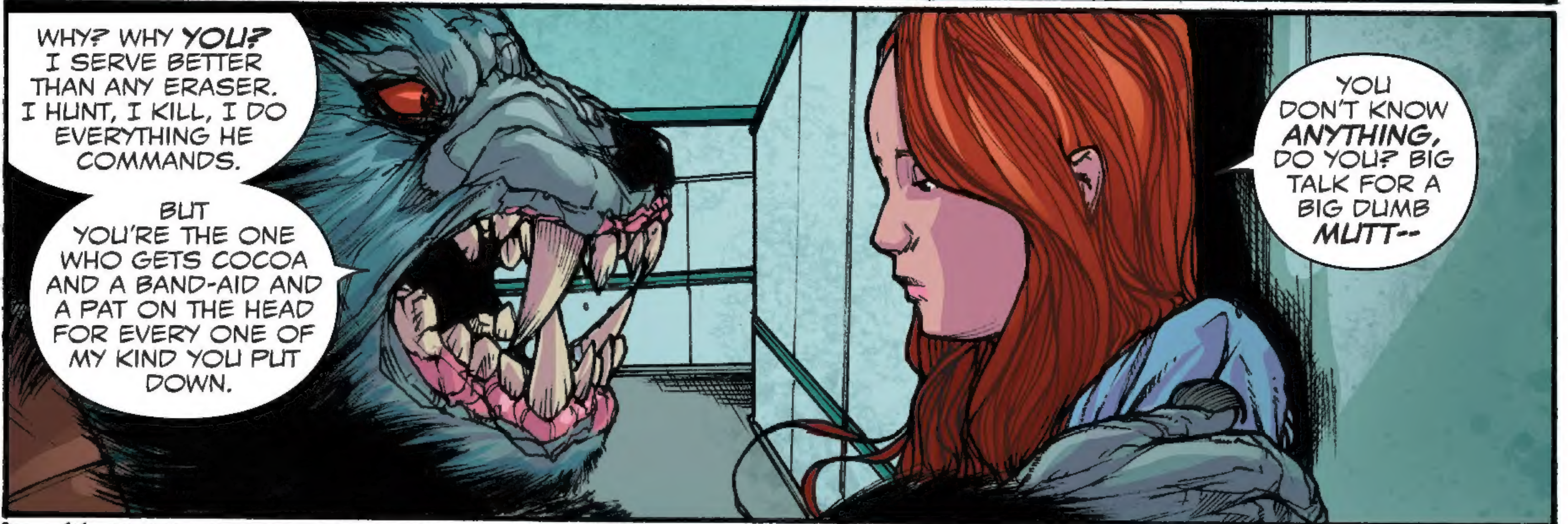
I AM **EXACTLY** LIKE THE OTHERS. MY **FAMILY**. IF THEY'RE EXPENDABLE, **SO AM I**.





"SPECIAL,"  
JEB SAID?  
YOU?

EAVESDROPPING,  
ARI? YUP. I'M HIS  
PRECIOUS PET STORE  
SNOWFLAKE AND I DIDN'T  
HAVE TO TERRORIZE  
A SINGLE KID TO--



WHY? WHY **YOU**?  
I SERVE BETTER  
THAN ANY ERASER.  
I HUNT, I KILL, I DO  
EVERYTHING HE  
COMMANDS.

BUT  
YOU'RE THE ONE  
WHO GETS COCOA  
AND A BAND-AID AND  
A PAT ON THE HEAD  
FOR EVERY ONE OF  
MY KIND YOU PUT  
DOWN.

YOU  
DON'T KNOW  
**ANYTHING**,  
DO YOU? BIG  
TALK FOR A  
BIG DUMB  
MUTT--



**AHH!**

I PULLED  
YOUR **FILE**,  
RUNT.

LIAR! THERE  
IS NO **FILE**--

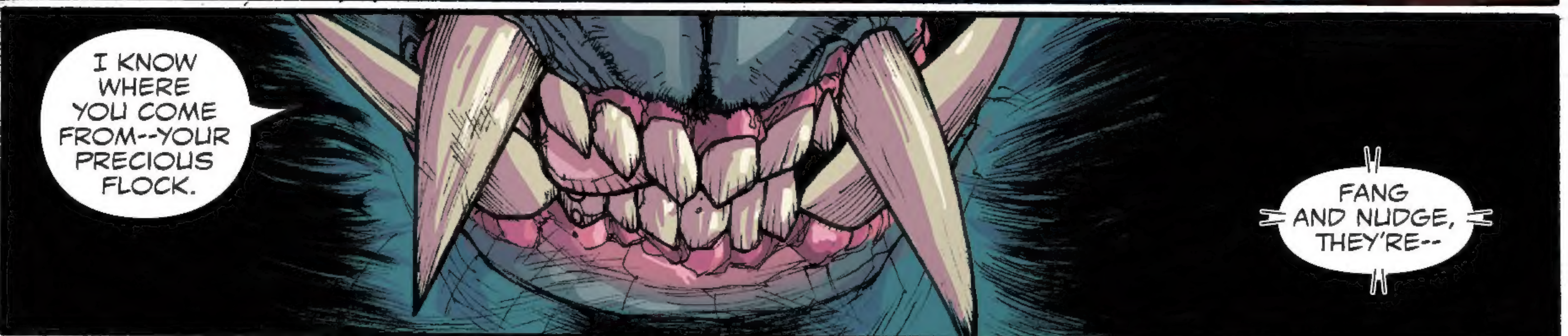
THERE **IS**.  
BLACK, WITH A  
SINGLE WHITE  
FEATHER.

MAX?



I  
KNOW WHAT  
THEY SPLICED  
YOU WITH--AND  
**WHO**.

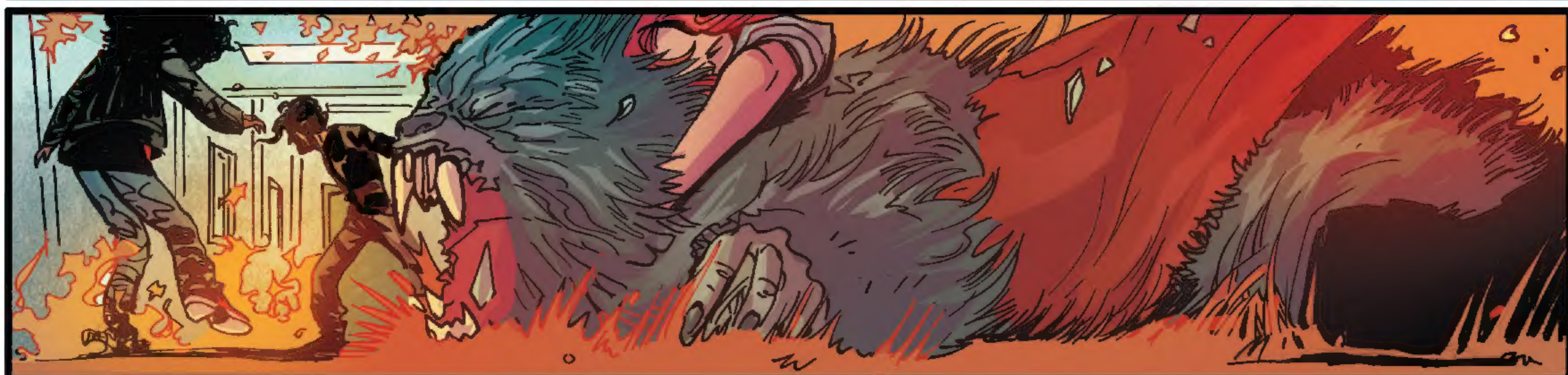
MAX, IT'S  
ANGEL--



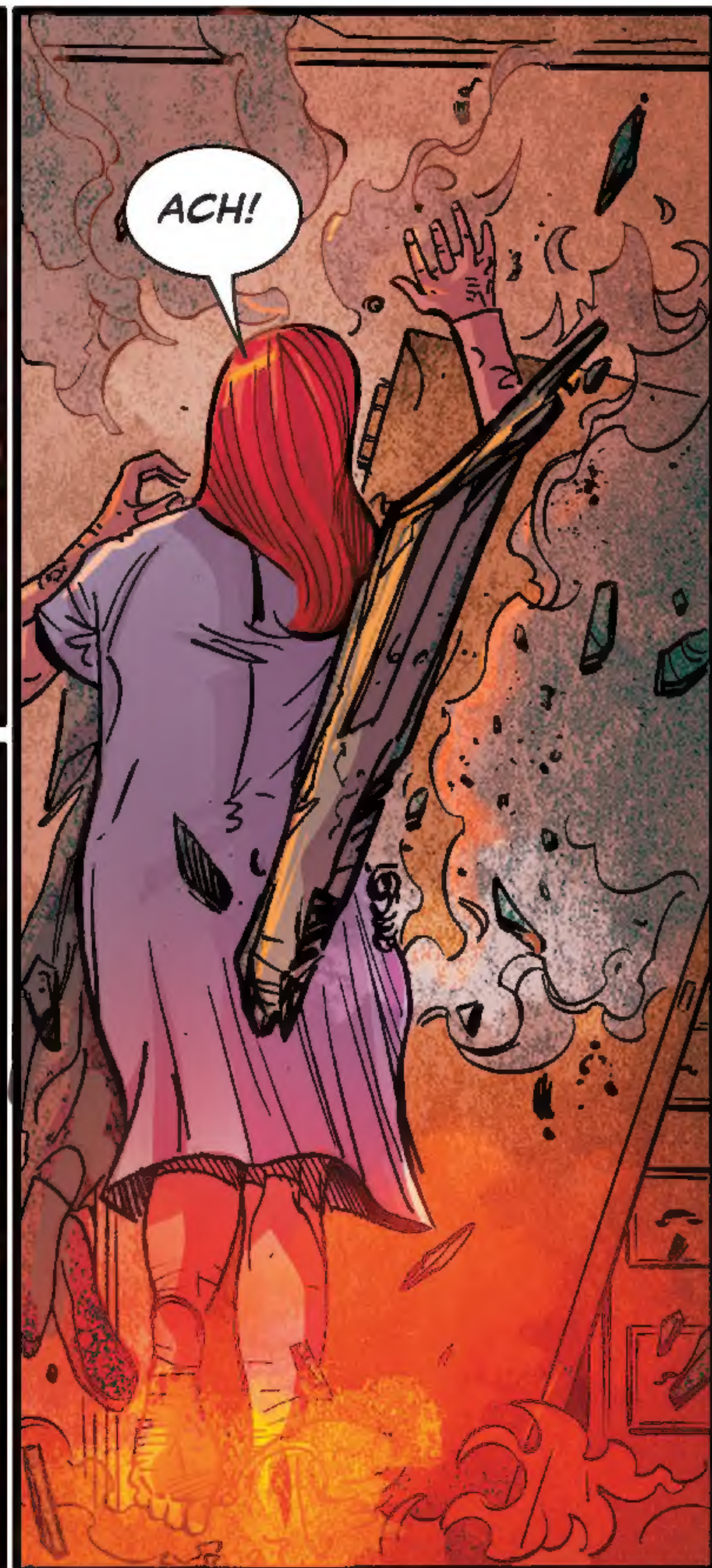
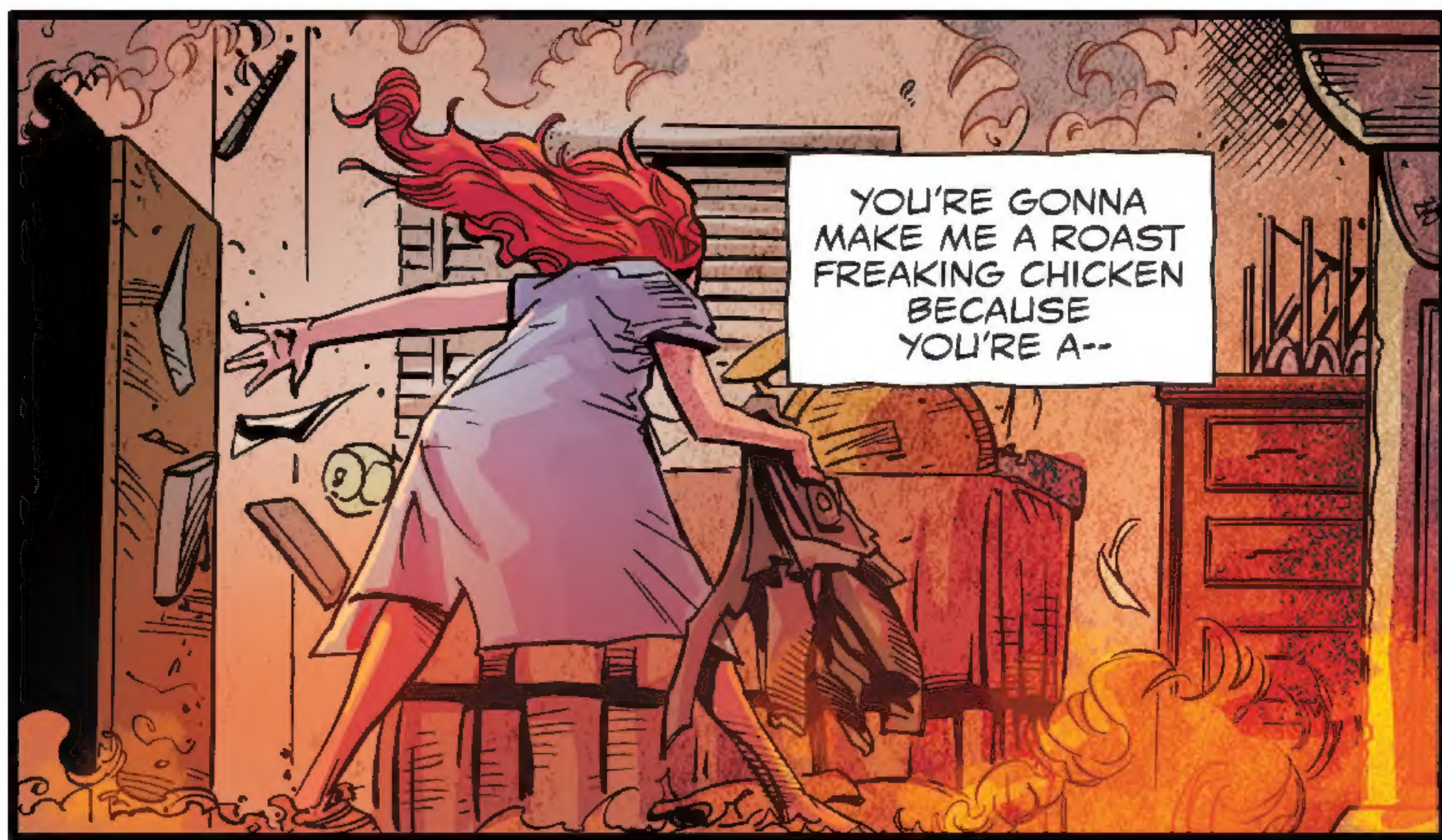
I KNOW  
WHERE  
YOU COME  
FROM--YOUR  
PRECIOUS  
FLOCK.

FANG  
AND NUDGE,  
THEY'RE--

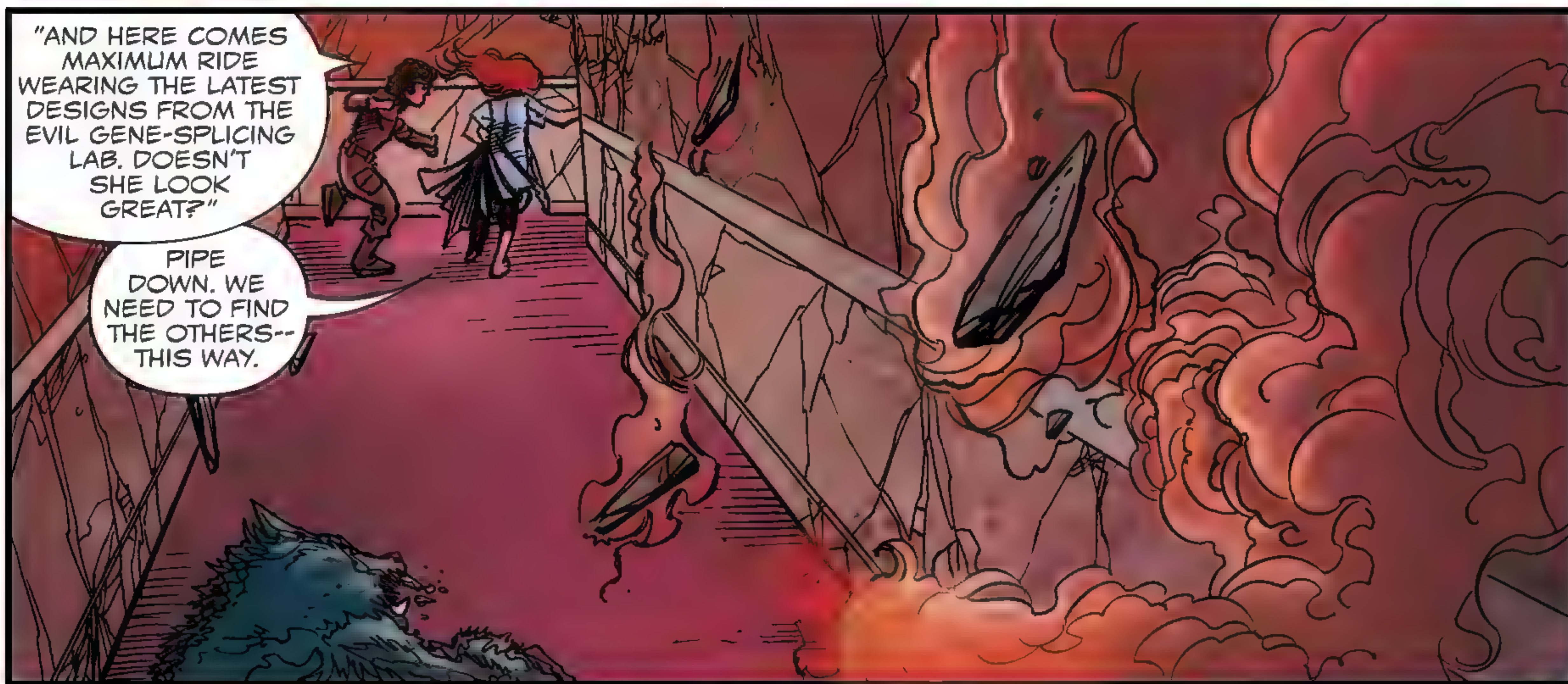
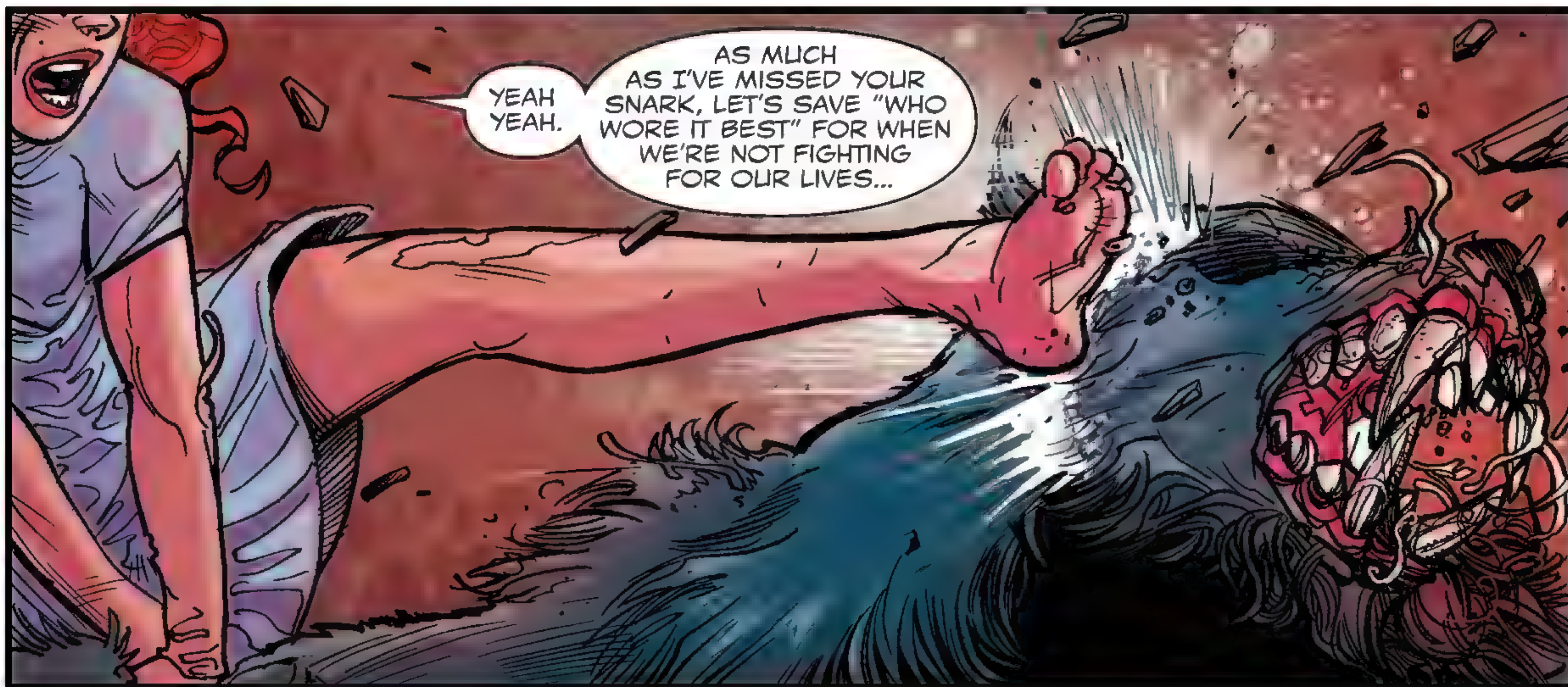




















MAXIM! COME BACK!

YOU WERE RIGHT, MAX!

IT WAS ALL A TEST!

LET ME EXPLAIN!

YOU'VE GOT TO SAVE THE WORLD!



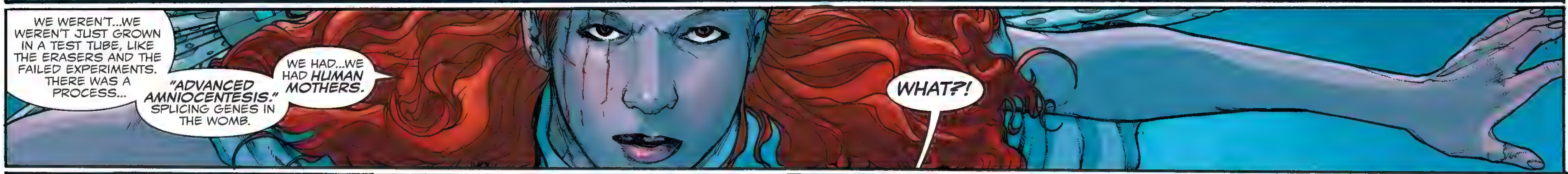


SCHOOL'S OUT FOREVER!

"A NOVEL," BY GAZZY VON GASMAN, ESQ.--

MAX, YOU'RE NOT NEARLY AS HAPPY AS "JUST OVERTHREW AN EVIL KID-TORTURING LABORATORY" WOULD DEMAND.

I FOUND ONE OF JEB'S FILES...IT WAS ABOUT...WHERE WE CAME FROM.



WE WEREN'T...WE WEREN'T JUST GROWN IN A TEST TUBE, LIKE THE ERASERS AND THE FAILED EXPERIMENTS. THERE WAS A PROCESS...

"ADVANCED AMNIOCENTESIS," SPLICING GENES IN THE WOMB.

WE HAD...WE HAD HUMAN MOTHERS.

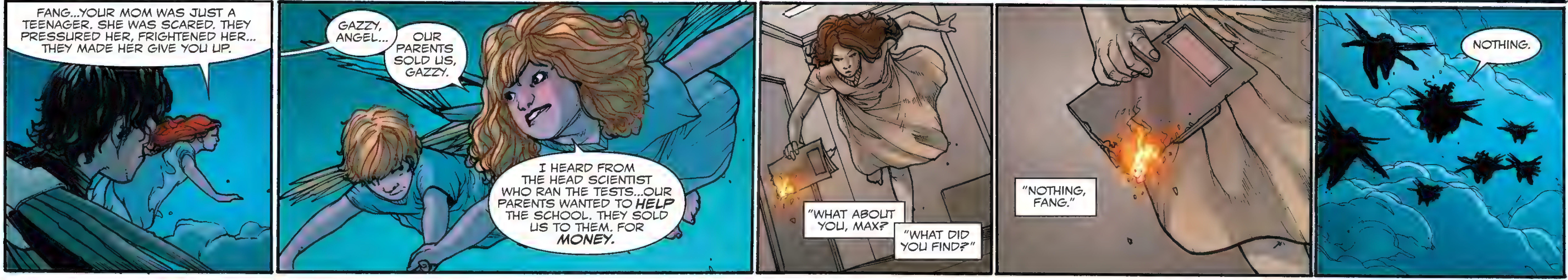
WHAT?!



NUDGE'S PARENTS WERE WAITING IN THE HOSPITAL...THE NURSES TOLD THEM SHE HAD DIED, AND GAVE NUDGE TO THE SCHOOL.

IGGY...  
IGGY, YOUR MOTHER... SHE...

SHE DIDN'T SURVIVE THE BIRTH. I'M SORRY.



FANG...YOUR MOM WAS JUST A TEENAGER. SHE WAS SCARED. THEY PRESSURED HER, FRIGHTENED HER... THEY MADE HER GIVE YOU UP.

GAZZY, ANGEL...

OUR PARENTS SOLD US, GAZZY.

I HEARD FROM THE HEAD SCIENTIST WHO RAN THE TESTS...OUR PARENTS WANTED TO HELP THE SCHOOL. THEY SOLD US TO THEM. FOR MONEY.

"WHAT ABOUT YOU, MAX?"

"WHAT DID YOU FIND?"

"NOTHING, FANG."

NOTHING.



I DID LEARN  
ONE THING  
THOUGH...

WHEREVER THAT  
FILE WAS ISSUED, IT  
DIDN'T COME FROM  
THE SCHOOL.

IT CAME  
FROM NEW  
YORK CITY.

WHERE EVERY  
RUNAWAY HEADS  
EVENTUALLY.

TIME  
TO FIND OUR  
DESTINY.

AND, YOU,  
KNOW, SIGHT-  
SEEING.

IN A  
WORD.

IT'S SO  
PRETTY!

AND  
SO WEIRD,  
NO ONE EVEN  
GIVES YOU THE  
STINKEYE. I BET  
I COULD POP  
MY WINGS  
AND--

DON'T,  
GASMAN. THAT  
WOULD--

MAAAX...

HUH?

WHAT...  
THE HECK.

MAAAX...

GUYS,  
I DON'T...

I DON'T  
FEEL SO...

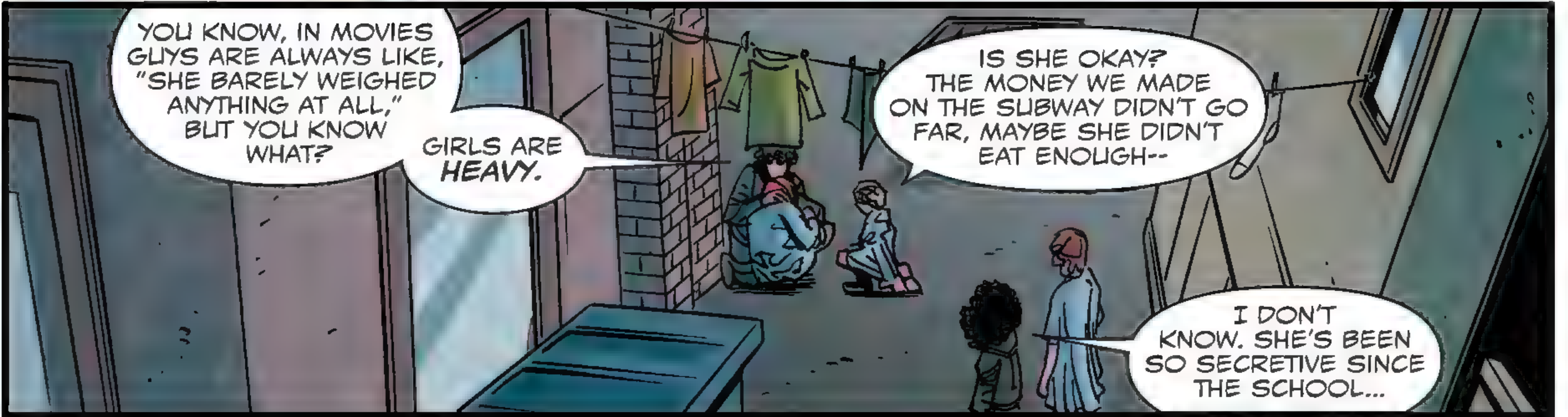




MAX!



SHE'S OUT COLD AND **SHAKING**-- WE NEED TO GET HER SOMEWHERE **SAFE**--

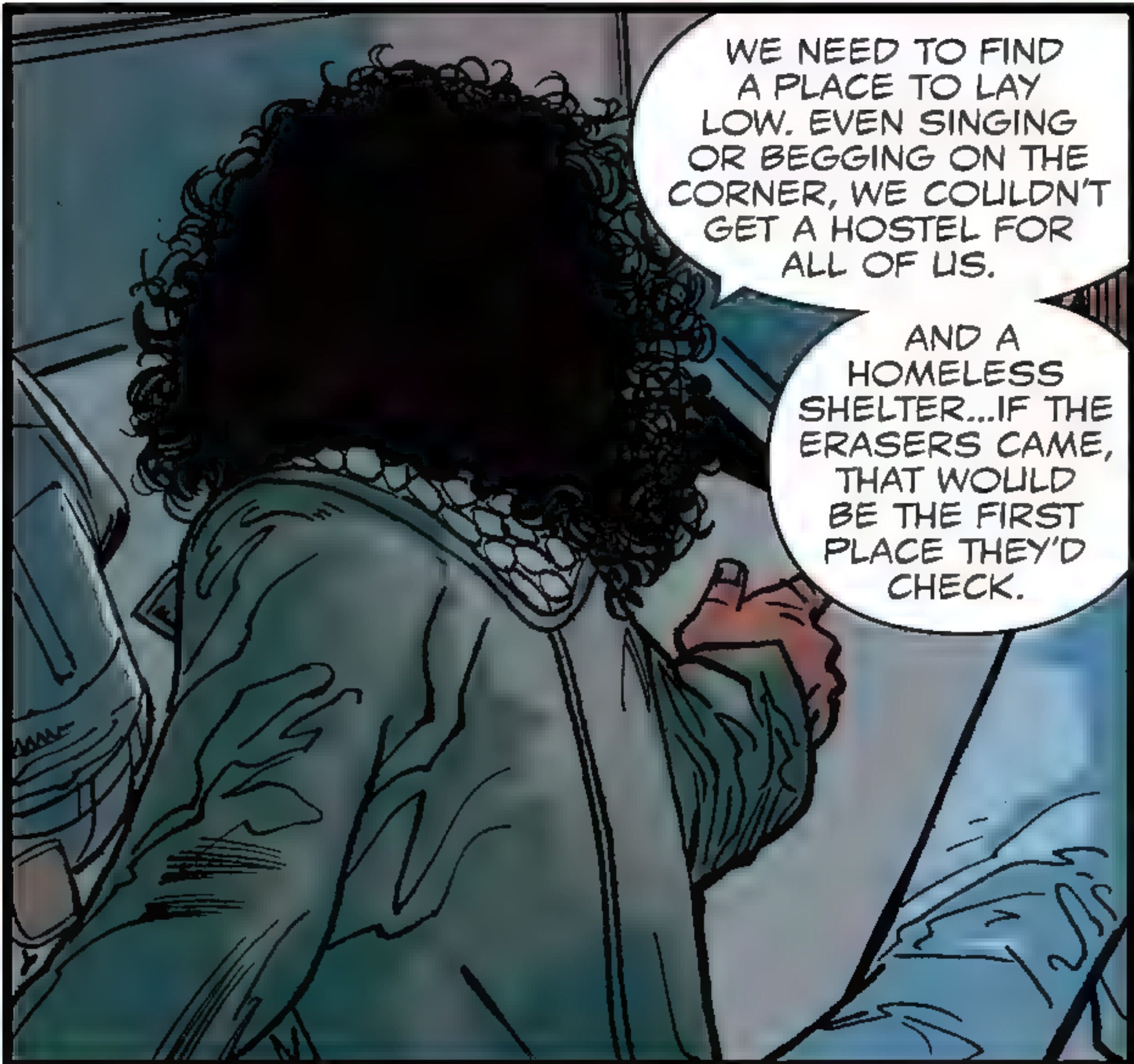


YOU KNOW, IN MOVIES GUYS ARE ALWAYS LIKE, "SHE BARELY WEIGHED ANYTHING AT ALL," BUT YOU KNOW WHAT?

GIRLS ARE **HEAVY**.

IS SHE OKAY? THE MONEY WE MADE ON THE SUBWAY DIDN'T GO FAR, MAYBE SHE DIDN'T EAT ENOUGH--

I DON'T KNOW. SHE'S BEEN SO SECRETIVE SINCE THE SCHOOL...



WE NEED TO FIND A PLACE TO LAY LOW. EVEN SINGING OR BEGGING ON THE CORNER, WE COULDN'T GET A HOSTEL FOR ALL OF US.

AND A HOMELESS SHELTER...IF THE ERASERS CAME, THAT WOULD BE THE FIRST PLACE THEY'D CHECK.



WE NEED...

HERE. DOWN HERE.

WHAT?

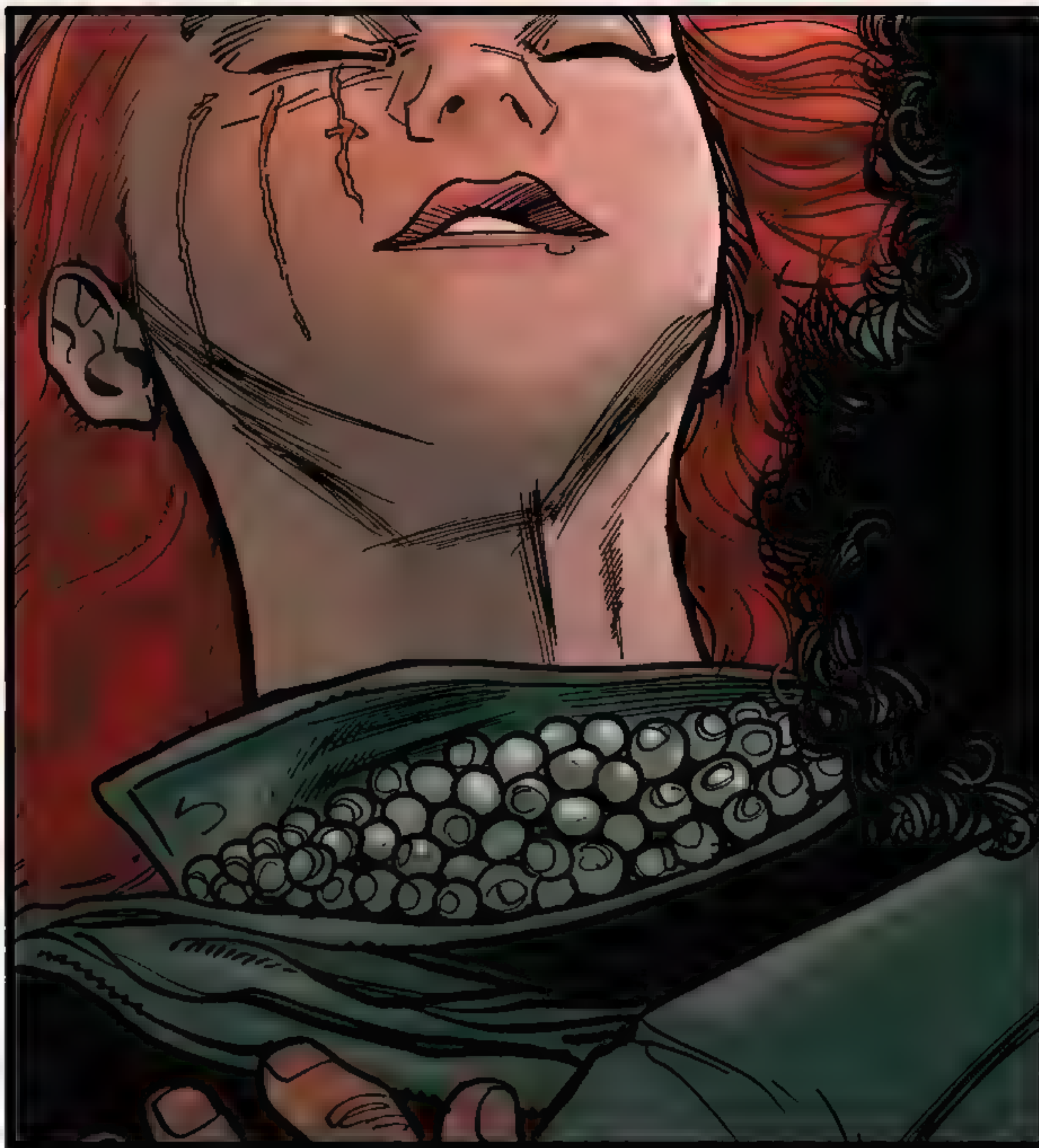
DOWN HERE. I'M NOT KIDDING. I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THIS MEANS, BUT **EVERY INSTINCT** IS TELLING ME **HERE**, DOWN HERE IS **SAFE**.

IT'S LIKE A COMPASS IN THE PIT OF MY STOMACH.

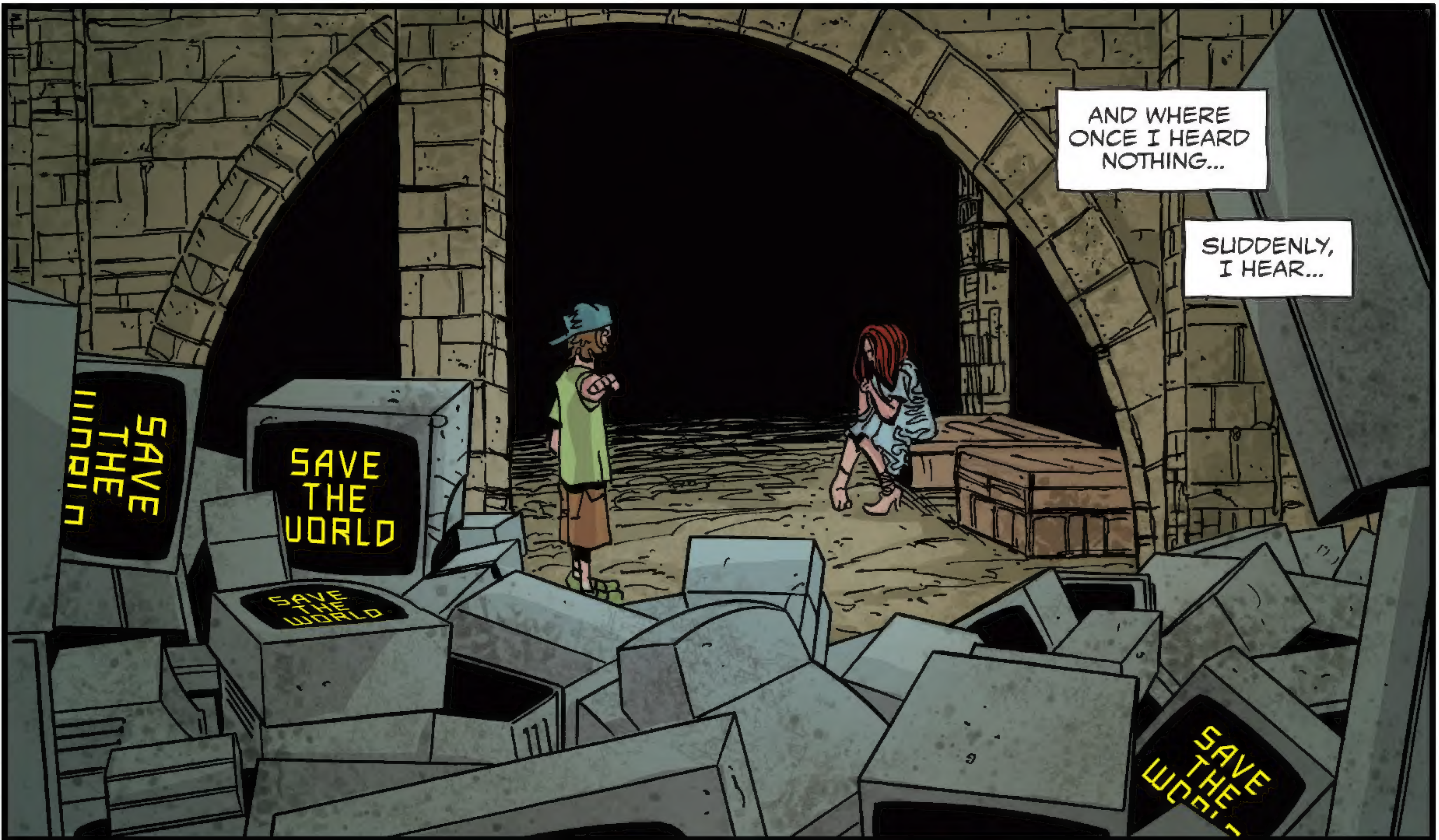


IT'S LIKE SOME SIDE EFFECT, SOME POWER I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW WAS MINE...











YOU'RE  
SPECIAL,  
MAXIMUM

SAVE  
US

MAXIMUM  
RIDE

SÁLVANOS

YOU  
MATTER  
MORE

انل ظفح

SAUVE-  
NOUS

SAVE  
THE WORLD,  
MAX!

спаси  
нас

SAVE  
THEM

私たちを救う

SAVE  
US

SAVE

SAVE

SAVE THE  
WORLD!

TO BE CONTINUED!



# Issue #4





